Redcat Access

Evaluation/RecordEntry Date:	Jun/2015
Submitting suppliers:	Lightspeed Technologies

Vendor Copy: ERAC Review

SUPPLEMENTARY PRODUCTS INFORMATION

Flexcat Add-on System
3.5mm Stereo Audio Cable
Media Connector with 4 x INPUTS and 2 x OUTPUTS to connect external media

DESCRIPTION

Redcat Access is a device using FM technology that is designed to enhance students' listening experience and minimize voice stress for the speaker. The teacher can speak in a moderate tone of voice, yet be heard clearly throughout the classroom. The device also allows students who are hard of hearing to have the speaker's voice directly connected to their hearing aid, while the rest of the class also benefit from the enhanced sound. The product can also simultaneously play sound from video or music while projecting the speaker's voice. The sound quality is clear and highly effective, and the system was very reliable and consistent during testing.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Comments:

The Redcat was a 2014 Cool Tool Award finalist for Ed Tech Digest's Classroom Hardware Solution Award.

APPLICATION TO EDUCATION

Does this product contribute to the operations of education? Extensively

Describe how this product fits into the field of education:

The system allows the teacher to speak in a moderate tone of voice, yet be heard clearly throughout the classroom. Students agreed they preferred listening to the speaker's voice when it was enhanced using the sound system. One student even stated he felt he was learning better during a French language class.

Does the product perform as intended?	Extensively
Are the features as expected for the intended purpose?	Extensively
Is the performance as expected for the intended purpose?	Extensively

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APPLICATION TO EDUCATION

Who is the intended user?

- District Administration
- School Administration
- Teacher Librarians
- Teacher-Counselors
- Classroom / Subject Teachers
- Specialist / Non Enrolling Teaching Staff
- Support Staff e.g. First Nations and Settlement Workers in the school
- Students for non-instructional purposes
- Student Teachers on practicum
- Students – General
- Anyone needing to speak to a group of people

Describe how different types of users would interact with this product:

The product allows students who are hard of hearing to have the speaker's voice directly connected to their hearing aid, while the rest of the class can also benefit from the enhanced sound. The multiple microphone feature allows the class to hear the teacher interact with different students, or the students to interact with each other for the benefit of the class.

What is the intended user proficiency level?:

- Entry

Comments:

The pendant Flexmike microphone that is worn around the neck is an appropriate distance from the speaker's mouth, and the magnetic clips allow it to be put on and off easily to quickly change speakers. It gives each speaker a sense of presence as the speaker's voice is projected more audibly. Generally, people don't wear a microphone when interacting, but with the system in use, there is a shift of mind in the classroom as it lends a formality to the lesson.

USER SUPPORT

Product User Community Support

Are appropriate product user community resources available?	Extensively
Does the user community have robust support?	Extensively

Frequently Asked Questions and/or Knowledge Base

Is a comprehensive FAQ available for general product use?	Extensively
Is a comprehensive FAQ available for troubleshooting?	Extensively

How to Guides

Are appropriate sample guides available for general product use? e.g. installation, creating reports and setting preferences. Installation guide is available if the end user does the installation.	Moderately

Short-cut or Quick Reference Guide

Are appropriate short-cut guides available for general product use?	Moderately
Are appropriate short-cut guides available for frequent or repetitive actions?	Moderately

User Manual

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USER SUPPORT

Does the user manual include instructions typical to the purpose of this product? e.g. installation, troubleshooting and accessing additional support.	Extensively

Online Chat and Email Support

Is effective chat and/or email customer support available?	Extensively

Phone Support

Is phone support available for customer service?	Extensively
Does the phone support have added value for this product?	Extensively

Onsite Support

Is effective onsite technical support available?	Extensively
Is effective onsite installation support available?	Extensively

User Support Overall

Is user support readily available?	Extensively
Is user support easy to access?	Extensively
Are language and terminology clear and easily understood, either clearly explained or naturally evident?	Extensively
Is user support organized for easy reference?	Extensively
Is user support cross linked to form an integrated resource across specific realms?	Moderately
Is user support accessible through searching?	Extensively
Is user support available for entry, intermediate and advanced users?	Extensively

How is user support accessed?

- PDF online
- Print
- Web interactive

Comments:

The online support has FAQ's, video tutorial, and then a chat option if the user still can't understand. The manual has written instructions for troubleshooting with a phone number if anyone encounters difficulty. The manual overview did not show all of the pieces in the kits and this caused some confusion initially. The basic setup was easier than expected, although the user would need a certain intuition for successfully setting up all pieces without referring to the manual.

GENERAL TECHNICAL DESIGN & SUPPORT

Do the technical specifications have all of the expected information?	Extensively
Do the technical specifications provide key information district technical support will need?	Extensively

Technical Support

If you accessed technical support during the evaluation, did the support provide a solution?	Extensively

Comments:

The support was prompt, with no wait time. The caller was referred to the correct department right away and the help given was immediate and satisfactory. The technicians were knowledgeable and answered all questions promptly in a courteous way. The suggestions solved the problem and were easy to follow and understand.

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GENERAL TECHNICAL DESIGN & SUPPORT

Technical Design

Is this product suited for usage in an educational setting?	Extensively
Is the physical design suited for the intended use?	Extensively

Indicate if there are there special cleaning or care instructions:

Microphones need to be plugged in at the end of the day. They charge quickly and drain slowly. The microphones lasted all day, but needed recharging for the next day.

Comment on the specific features of this product:

The microphone has the option to switch on/off and the volume is adjustable, which is very practical as the speaker moves around. The blinking light
indicates if the speaker is too far away. The system can be used as a speaker for a computer or other electronic device. It can also be used in conjunction with a student who has hearing loss to specifically target that student while also allowing the rest of the class to benefit. There are two microphones so a student and teacher can use a microphone at the same time. The system doesn't take up a lot of space and the speaker can be wall-mounted for further space conservation and/or to prevent damage to the equipment.

Installation

Who are the installation instructions intended for?

- End user

Are the installation instructions clear and easily followed?	Moderately
Are the options during installation clear to achieve the desired configuration?	Extensively
Did the installation process proceed as expected?	Extensively

Accessibility Features

Are features available to adapt for people with disabilities?	Moderately

Comments:

For people with hearing loss or voice dysfunction, this is a wonderful product. However, if someone has vision problems, or difficulty with manual dexterity, the blinking lights and small buttons may present a challenge.

TRAINING

Indicate the types of training you accessed:

- Online training modules

Were the training resources:

- Appropriate for entry level user?
- Appropriate for intermediate level user?
- Appropriate for advanced level user?

Did the training cover a sufficient breadth of topics?	Extensively
Was the training self-directed?	Extensively
Did the training include multimedia?	Not at all or slightly
Did the training directly relate to the version being evaluated?	Extensively
Was the training presented in an engaging way?	Moderately
Was the training paced appropriately?	Extensively

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TRAINING

Comments:

The online tutorial allows users to jump to various pages and move at their own pace, rather than having to move page by page.

EQUIPMENT/TOOLS/APPLIANCES

Is the function of every button explained or naturally evident?	Extensively
Is non-text equivalent for text provided?	Extensively
Are multiple ways to convey or differentiate information provided? (e.g. colour, text, symbol, location)	Extensively
Is device communication speed satisfactory?	Extensively

Comments:

The buttons are located in obvious positions, and have symbols or text to make their use clear. The lights on the microphone have different colours to let teachers know whether they are on, connected, or out of range.

Audio - Input (microphone)

Is the resulting audio quality satisfactory?	Extensively
Is the resulting audio quality effective for the intended application?	Extensively

Comments:

This device is designed to enhance students' listening experience and minimize voice stress for the speaker. The quality is clear and highly effective.

Output – General

Does output performance meet expectations?	Extensively
Does the physical design meet expectations?	Extensively
Does the feature set meet expectations?	Extensively
Do the configuration options meet expectations?	Extensively
Is the output effective for the intended application?	Extensively
Does the output accuracy meet expectations?	Extensively
Is the output consistent?	Extensively

Comments:

The system was very reliable and consistent. The quality of audio and the battery length of the microphones were both outstanding.

Audio Output

Does the audio output quality meet expectations?	Extensively
Does the clarity of music meet expectations?	Extensively
Does the clarity of voice meet expectations?	Extensively
Is the volume control appropriate for intended use?	Extensively
Is pass through audio available?	Extensively

Comments:

The system has the ability to simultaneously play sound from video or music while projecting the speaker's voice. Students commented on the clarity of sound.

Form Factor

Are the charging options suitable for the intended use?	Extensively
Are the storage options suitable for the intended use?	Extensively
Are the synchronizing options suitable for the intended use?	Extensively

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